

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 229, insert between lines 15 and 16 the following new section:

SEC. 1106. REVIEW OF MILWAUKEE AND WAUKESHA INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE OFFICES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) REVIEW.—The Commissioner of Internal Revenue shall appoint an independent expert in employment and personnel matters to conduct a review of the investigation conducted by the task force, established by the Internal Revenue Service and initiated in January 1998, of the equal employment opportunity process of the Internal Revenue Service offices located in the area of Milwaukee and Waukesha, Wisconsin.

(2) CONTENT.—The review conducted under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) a determination of the accuracy and validity of such investigation; and

(B) if determined necessary by the expert, a further investigation of such offices relating to—

(i) the equal employment opportunity process; and

(ii) any alleged discriminatory employment-related actions, including any alleged violations of Federal law.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than July 1, 1999, the independent expert shall report on the review conducted under subsection (a) (and any recommendations for action) to Congress and the Commissioner of Internal Revenue.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, this amendment has been cleared on both sides. We believe it is a good amendment.

I urge its adoption.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate? If there is no objection, the amendment is agreed to.

The amendment (No. 2357) was agreed to.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IN THIS TIME OF HOT AIR TOBACCO FARMERS SHOULD KEEP COOL

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, it's fair to say that the so-called tobacco "debate"—and I characterize most of the rhetorical chatter as "so-called" because it (1) has amounted to little more than posturing, and (2) has created enormous uncertainty and unease for the thousands of fine Americans who earn their living in the tobacco industry.

The public health community (and its "Amen corner" in Congress) would delight in putting the tobacco companies out of business rather than seriously and honestly addressing the

issues facing the hundreds of communities in North Carolina and other states that are economically dependant on the tobacco industry. Mr. President, it's unfortunate that this issue has become so politicized that usually rational members of Congress have been totally irrational in their exaggeration of the entire situation.

Moreover, Mr. President, it is not anywhere in recorded history that anyone ever began smoking because a gun had been leveled at his or her head with orders to smoke, or else. There is no Senator who doesn't support efforts to curtail youth smoking, and not one parent has come forward asserting that Joe Camel and the Marlboro Man have more control over their children than they do.

But all the pious, exaggerated political nonsense aside, farmers must continue to grow their legal crop in order to provide for the livelihood of their families.

Sometime back, I promised the farm leaders of North Carolina that I would meet with the chief executives of all tobacco companies to encourage them to buy the maximum amount of U.S. tobacco possible in 1998. I have kept that commitment. I have indeed met with the leaders of all companies, one by one. Their concern for tobacco farmers, and for all other citizens who earn their livings "in tobacco", was immediate, impressive and sincere.

There is no doubt in my mind, as a result of these meetings, that leaders of the tobacco companies do indeed intend to purchase as much U.S. tobacco as possible this marketing season.

In fact, some CEOs assured me that they plan to purchase more U.S. tobacco this marketing season than they purchased in 1997. One company leader emphasized his company's plans to increase its purchases of U.S. leaf every year through 2002.

The tobacco companies understand the need to purchase at least this year's effective quota in order to prevent another substantial decrease in quota next year. There will be a lot of personal bankruptcies in North Carolina if our farmers are faced with another 10 to 17 percent reduction in quota. But I am confident—and I do expect—that the tobacco companies will honor their commitment to me and the tobacco farmers of this country to purchase U.S. tobacco this marketing season.

Mr. President, everyone in the tobacco community—particularly the tobacco companies—realizes that the tobacco farmers should have been included in the so-called "National Tobacco Settlement" in the first place.

Tobacco farmers and manufacturers are at a crossroads that may very well define their destiny. They can either choose to work in good faith, or they can choose not to. If they choose to harbor ill-will and mistrust, the destruction rampant in this industry will be far greater than anything Congress could ever levy by politics or legislation.

Mr. President, during these obviously difficult times in tobacco country, squadrons of politicians in Washington and elsewhere are eager for headlines back home at the expense of the farmers. No one knows what will happen with the McCain bill, nor with any other tobacco legislation that may come forward. But I can promise you this: there will continue to be a number of special interest groups that will try to exploit the fears of the tobacco farmer for their own gain.

I can counsel our folks back home to avoid being disillusioned. If we work together and in good faith, the tobacco farmers of America will continue to have a future, no matter the threats and pleadings from the political chorus—which is becoming a little more discordant with every passing day.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I want to say to the Senator from North Carolina, independent of the subject matter to which he just spoke, that I see him and the way he lives, and he is one tough bird. I admire his courage and I admire the way he keeps after it.

I just wish him the best of health.

Mr. HELMS. I thank the Senator.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE RESTRUCTURING AND REFORM ACT OF 1998

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 2343

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I thank Senator ROTH and Senator MOYNIHAN for having accepted the Leahy-Ashcroft amendment which will provide electronic access to the IRS information on the Internet. This amendment will require the IRS to maintain its web site with current forms, instructions and publications so people anywhere with access to the Internet can have access to those forms.

To allow the public to have easy, efficient electronic access to all the IRS information that may be needed to adequately prepare a tax filing is a real benefit to the people, and I thank Senator ROTH and Senator MOYNIHAN for accepting the Leahy-Ashcroft amendment which will provide electronic access to the IRS information on the Internet. And I thank Senator LEAHY for his involvement in that measure.

Mr. President, I am pleased that the bipartisan amendment introduced by Senator LEAHY and me has been adopted into the current legislation. This amendment will give individuals the ability to access a great deal of material from the IRS. Revenue rulings,